

[View this email in your browser](#)



Teachers and chaperones, Sheila Vance McKell and Susie Smare with the 2015 S2I students at Asakusa, Tokyo. Middle row: Harrison Taylor, Viresh Patel, Dylan Gray, Nate Michelotti, Jakob Bariteau. Bottom row: Annabel Marshall, Vidushi Seth, Ariana Knoefel.

Seasoned Teacher Chaperone Sees Personal Growth in Young Exchange Students

BY SHEILA VANCE MCKELL, *Sunnyvale Middle School Teacher, S2I 2015 Chaperone*

In its second year, the Sunnyvale Sister City student exchange program with Iizuka, Japan provides a safe and exciting opportunity for 7th – 12th grade

students residing in the city of Sunnyvale to broaden the scope of their experiences. Participation in such programs reinforces student awareness of the global society of which they are a part.

As a chaperone accompanying students traveling internationally over the past 10 years, I can attest to the significance of such a journey. Experiencing a culture first hand, meeting and exchanging views with leaders of another culture in various capacities, while living as guests in the homes and going to school with students their own ages creates opportunities for lasting bonds and opens students to alternative perspectives.

Without fail, students who participate in such programs come back more mature, independent, and excited about additional opportunities to learn, support/participate, and perhaps enhance not only their own communities, but also the world at large.

Joy, excitement, curiosity...it just does not get any better than reliving one's own past experiences through the eyes of our youth.

Many thanks to the Sunnyvale Sister City Association, the City of Sunnyvale, the Sunnyvale School District, and the Fremont Union High School District for giving the youth of Sunnyvale and myself the opportunity to be a part of this unique program.



Jay Yamanaga and the Maino family at Iizuka City Hall.

Iizuka Host Family Welcomes SSCA Volunteer Chaperone

BY JAY YAMANAGA, SSCA S2I 2015 Chaperone

This past June, I had the wonderful opportunity to join the S2I student exchange program as a chaperone. The trip was an exciting, exhilarating and exhausting experience (16 hour time difference!)

My favorite event was the garden party at Mr. Aso's home. It was fun for me to watch all the students, host families, staff, and program officials having a chance to relax and socialize as a group and to observe how close everyone had become after only one week.

I hope everyone had as much fun as I as we wandered around Tokyo and Iizuka. Thank you to everyone at SSCA and our partners in the Sunnyvale school districts who helped to make this trip a great success. Finally, a special thanks to everyone in Iizuka who hosted us both at school and in their homes

(especially to the Maino family who hosted me!). It was truly an awesome trip! Taihen otsukaresama deshita!



Nagasue host family and Vidushi Seth at karaoke in Iizuka.

Multi-generational Karaoke Experience in Japan

BY VIDUSHI SETH, *S21 2015 Participant*

My favorite part about staying with my Iizuka host family was that the atmosphere was always lively and cheerful because of the many family members. This was especially true when we all went to karaoke together, which is not something my family would normally do in the United States. The 11 of us sang songs to our liking, both alone and in groups, but the cheering never stopped. My host family and I sang together in both Japanese and English, and we rejoiced together when we earned high scores from the karaoke machine.

Everyone, from the youngest cousin to the elderly grandfather, was constantly upbeat and clapping for encouragement. In the end, 3 hours of continuous singing passed in the blink of an eye.



Sunnyvale students, Viresh Patel (left) and Dylan Gray (right), get firsthand experience in international diplomacy in a friendly game of dodgeball in PE class with their classmates at Futase Junior High.

Language no Barrier to Communication

BY DYLAN GRAY, *S2I 2015 Participant*

While I was in Japan I had many great experiences, but something I struggled with was communication with my host family and most of the students. I had a hard time communicating with them at all, in the beginning, because I spoke almost no Japanese and they spoke almost no English. Luckily, I was able to use a translation app which made effective communication possible, most of the time. When I was not able to use the translation app, I just used gestures and expressions to try and communicate what I was saying. My host family was

able to do the same, so by the end of the trip we could communicate perfectly fine without having too much trouble. This made my experience better and more enjoyable.



Ariana Knoefel gets enthusiastically greeted by her classmates at Kaho High School.

Friendship across the Oceans

BY ARIANA KNOEFEL, *S2I 2015 Participant*

The first day at Kaho High School school everyone was crowding around me and asking many questions and treated me like I were a celebrity. The students and teachers were very nice and eager to help if needed. My host family was very fun and tried to communicate with the English that they knew. Since I knew some Japanese it was not hard. If we could not understand each other we used a translator. After I came home, my host family called on my birthday and that was a nice surprise. I am still talking with the daughter Misaki and we use an app so that I can translate what I want to say to her in Japanese and vice

versa. I miss my host family very much and was so happy to see them again when they called me. I would love to go back to Japan and spend more time with them and I will never forget my experience.



Vidushi Seth, Jakob Bariteau, and Dylan Gray participate in an unexpected *taiko* (traditional Japanese drumming) lesson during the Iizuka welcome party at Igisu Elementary School.

Family Happy with Son's Trip to Iizuka, Japan

BY BARITEAU FAMILY, *Parent of S2I 2015 a Participant*

As soon as he heard about the opportunity to travel to Japan and participate in an exchange program, Jakob embraced the idea whole-heartedly. He has always been adventurous and interested in traveling and was excited about the idea of being immersed in the Japanese culture and experiencing daily life in a different country.

By the time Jakob left for his trip, our family had gotten to know the chaperones and children he'd be traveling with as well as had a chance to communicate with his host family. While in Japan, Jakob had the opportunity to experience both rural and urban Japan, in Iizuka and Tokyo. He visited schools, museums, hot springs, amusement parks, historical sites and shopping centers. He learned a lot about Japanese culture, ate great food, and had a great experience all around. He is very much looking forward to his opportunity to host a student from Japan this August!



Iizuka Students Visit Sunnyvale

BY MARK KATO

As part of SSCA's student exchange program, 20 Iizuka Middle School Students will visit Sunnyvale from 8/21 (Fri) to 8/26 (Wed) after enjoying two days in San Francisco. They will stay with host families in Sunnyvale and attend Sunnyvale Middle School and Fremont High School on 8/24 (Mon) and 8/25 (Tue). Most of students from Iizuka will be visiting the USA for the first time

on this trip and they are very excited to meet new friends in Sunnyvale. Please say "hi" to them when you see them during their visit.



"When you experience a different culture you gain a deeper understanding of yourself and those around you—deepening your knowledge about the world in a way that books, school assignments, and a professional career can never reveal."

– U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

SSCA Offers New Adult Exchange Program (AEP)

Building on our successful student exchange programs with Iizuka, Japan, The Sunnyvale Sister City Association now offers you the opportunity to travel to and host like-minded adults from Iizuka!

How It Works

Open to any adult willing to be a host themselves, SSCA will seek a willing host in a similar livelihood in Iizuka. As with any travel, you will need to cover your own expenses, but your host will offer you free accommodation in their home for approximately three days, timing to be set by you and your host. SSCA will actively encourage participation in the host's workplace and can offer travel guidance and suggestions for participants. If an ideal match cannot be identified, SSCA will identify best alternatives, or notify you if no match is available. We ask for a minimum of six weeks' notice in order to find your best host.

If you are interested in participating or simply have further questions, contact us by emailing 2015aep@sunnyvalesistercity.org



Fenwick & West is proud to support
the international efforts of the
Sunnyvale Sister City Association.

**FENWICK
& WEST**

MOUNTAIN VIEW, SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE
WWW.FENWICK.COM



www.benesse-sv.com

We're proud to support
Sunnyvale Sister City Association



Panasonic Silicon Valley Center



Proud to support the Sunnyvale Sister City Association

Panasonic

The Miner Foundation proudly supports the Sunnyvale Sister City Association.

MINER
FOUNDATION

NEC Corporation of America is proud to support the international mission of the SSCA!



www.necam.com

NEC



Active Asset Allocation Investment Advisory Services

1250 Oakmead Parkway, Suite 210, Sunnyvale, California 94085
www.infinity8investments.com

Volunteers Wanted

The Sunnyvale Sister City Association is looking for volunteers to help with our activities. If you are passionate about contributing to the community, please send a message to

mark@sunnyvalesistercity.org

Subscribe

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send a message to

subscribe@sunnyvalesistercity.org

We Need Sponsors

As a completely volunteer-run non-profit organization [501(c)(3)], the Sunnyvale Sister City Association (SSCA) is looking for sponsors. The SSCA has three levels of sponsorship: GOLD (\$2,000 per year), SILVER (\$1,000 per year), and BRONZE (\$500 per year). Please help us continue to offer dynamic events to the community and support Sunnyvale's future generations. If you are interested, please send a message to

mark@sunnyvalesistercity.org

Find Us

www.sunnyvalesistercity.org/

www.facebook.com/groups/sunnyvalesistercity/
